

East Houston Sector Study

Executive Summary

Overview

- ❖ The eastern sector covers 71.3 square miles or 45,603 acres of land (11.3 percent of the City of Houston).
- ❖ The study area is bounded on the south by I-45 south; on the west by US 59; on the north and east by the Houston City limits. The area is heavily industrialized especially around the Port of Houston where a high concentration of petrochemical industries is located. The study area also includes several historic communities such as Second Ward, Fifth Ward, Harrisburg and Pleasantville.
- ❖ Population in the Eastern Sector grew 4% between 1990 and 2000 compared to a citywide growth of nearly 20%.
- ❖ Between 1990 and 2000, the area experienced a dramatic increase in Hispanic population (66.9 percent) and a 41.5 percent decrease in White population.
- ❖ The Eastern Sector has 12 parcels of undeveloped land of more than 100 acres.
- ❖ Industrial land covers 17 percent, and vacant and undeveloped land is higher at 32 percent.
- ❖ The Eastern Sector is also largely known for its high concentration of industrial land along the Houston Ship Channel.
- ❖ In 2000, the total population of the Eastern Sector was 273, 412, approximately 14% of the City's total.

Development Issues

- ❖ Deterioration of neighborhoods and coexistence with heavy industries.
- ❖ Unattractive and rural image.
- ❖ Drainage and flooding problem.
- ❖ Environmental issues (Petrochemical waste, landfill, air, rail spill).
- ❖ Evidence of aging or inadequate infrastructure to meet growth, mobility and safety needs.

Growth and Development Potential

- ❖ Have 12 parcels of undeveloped land of more than 100 acres.
- ❖ High concentration of industrial land along the Houston Ship Channel and rail corridors.
- ❖ Accessible by rail, air, Port of Houston and major thoroughfares.

Strategies

- ❖ The City should ***take the lead in developing a unified, long-range vision/plan*** for the area that sets priorities and outlines a set of strategies and actions to achieve the desired vision. Capitalizing on the area's opportunities and assets, the plan would identify opportunities for strategically leveraging public investment that would attract private investment and development.
- ❖ ***Market the plan***, promoting opportunities to potential developers and marshal the support of the local community.
- ❖ Ensure ***continued coordination among investors and stakeholders*** and play a strong role in influencing the pattern of private sector development in the sector by representing the interests and concerns of the major stakeholders.
- ❖ Ensure ***an open dialogue with vested stakeholders*** such as major landowners, investors and developers about the needs and future of this area. In addition, a review of proposed investment by local governmental agencies, such as the Harris County Flood Control District's project on Sims Bayou, TXDOT infrastructure and the City of Houston CIP commitments, is essential to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure that investment is targeted to priority areas identified in the plan.
- ❖ ***Finance needed infrastructure improvements*** to attract new development will require investigating other financing tools such as Special Districts, Enterprise Zones and Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones and developing a set of incentives. Special districts have recently been introduced in the study area to pay for part of the infrastructure costs of new development.
- ❖ Develop an ***Infrastructure Master Plan*** that addresses roads and utility needs and anticipates future development/redevelopment, with a timeline for committing to undertake infrastructure improvements and provide a positive direction to encourage investment in the area attractive to development.
- ❖ ***Coordinate with Metro*** to enhance transit use through public outreach and infrastructure improvements.